

## **Lawmaker seeks spending boost for aeronautics R&D**

Rep. John Larson (D-Conn.), whose congressional district is home to engine maker Pratt & Whitney, plans to introduce a bill to give the FAA and NASA "vigorous and robust increases" in aeronautics research and development funding, according to a letter urging other House members to co-sponsor the legislation.

Larson's proposed Aeronautics Research and Development Revitalization Act also would provide "focused" investments to promote the development of quieter, more fuel-efficient, less polluting aircraft, Larson wrote in his "dear colleague" letter. Developing such aircraft would allow U.S. industry "to dominate anticipated aviation markets, as well as create new markets in cities and regions whose airports have been underutilized because of perceived negative environmental impacts."

The legislation is designed to counter growing challenges to U.S. "pre-eminence" in commercial and military aerospace, Larson wrote. Over the past two decades, the U.S. has cut spending on aerospace R&D in half, while its share of the world aerospace market has fallen from about 70 percent to less than 50 percent. Meanwhile, the European Union is pursuing an aggressive plan, "European Aeronautics: A Vision for 2020," to win global leadership in aeronautics and aviation by 2020 (DAILY, March 27, 2001).

The letter says Larson's bill "is an opportunity for Congress to signal our commitment to a strong and robust aviation sector and our intent to revitalize it in the face of new global challenges." Larson, a member of the House Armed Services and Science committees, plans to release details of his legislation and a list of co-sponsors at a May 2 Capitol Hill press conference.

Larson is not the only member of Congress expressing concern about the aerospace industry's fortunes. In an April 23 speech to the Aero Club, Sen. John "Jay" Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), chairman of the Senate Commerce aviation subcommittee, called for making the federal R&D tax credit permanent and increasing federal funding for aerospace R&D.

Rockefeller also proposed that the U.S. develop a plan for countering foreign regulatory decisions that discriminate against U.S. aerospace companies.

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